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# 'G-rated' pageant fails to daunt Molokai

By Rick Carroll  
Advertiser Staff Writer

KAUNAKAKAI, Molokai — If anyone expected a lightning bolt to split the town in two, they were disappointed.

This hot and dusty little town appears — so far — to be surviving its first gay pageant with aplomb and sophistication.

"You never saw anything on Molokai like this before," promoter Billie Kaaihue of the Halau Hula Ohana told a crowd of 500 who flocked to see Thursday night's show, a first in that island's history. He staged the gay pageant in the county's softball diamond with a goal of raising \$25,000 to send his 40-member Halau Hula Ohana on a trip to Disneyland.

"Awwwright," a real young man roared as Ursula Wells, 31, a curvy 5-foot-9 Honolulu college student, strutted down a runway built by Boy Scouts at home plate.

Other early favorites, judging by audience response, included a buxom transsexual named Brandy, a petite Molokai brunette named Tiya Rodillon and pouty Kira Garrett of Waipahu.

Contestants, who range from 23 to 31, advance to the talent competition tonight and head into final judging in evening gowns on Sunday when "Miss Gay Pacifica" will be crowned.

"If this is a big success," Kaaihue said, "we'll do it every year."



Advertiser photos by Carl Viti

**Ursula Wells**  
*Draws roar of approval*

The beige, concrete-block Kaunakakai Baptist Church stands with its back to the softball diamond, a stand similar to that taken by a half-

dozen local Christian ministers. They joined Maui County Mayor Hannibal Tavares in opposition to the gay pageant on grounds it's "unwholesome."

"I wonder about the exploitation of young men with sexual identity problems for the sake of a few people who want to make money and send their children to the Mainland," said Pastor Rick Lazor.

"I love homosexuals the way Jesus does," he said, "but this thing has been made into a carte blanche categorization of all Christians as red-neck, fundamentalist bigots."

"That's not true at all," he said.

He said the gay pageant may prompt the churches of Molokai to begin a gay ministry on the island — an outreach program to help homosexuals.

"I know for a fact there are young men on this island with sexual identity problems," he said. "All transvestites who live here are not happy."

Others voiced fears that Molokai, the so-called "Friendly Island," might become Hawaii's equivalent of San Francisco's Castro Street.

The church put on its own show last night — "Up With People."

For Molokai, where the Jaycees' summer carnival is the year's big event, the gay pageant seemed like something naughty straight out of Las Vegas. Except the lavishly coiff-

ed and gowned contestants kept their clothes on.

"G-rated," said hostess Monique Ocampo, of "Monique's All-Star Revue."

Many in the crowd had come to support the gays and decry the positions taken by church and state. Everywhere, the gays were the talk of the town.

Over breakfast at the Pau Hana Inn:

"... and they looked so nice," a housewife said, sipping coffee.

At the airport:

"I'm going tonight," a baggage handler winked.

Tourists, too, made plans.

"There's not much else going on," a Chicago visitor shrugged.

If the pageant boosted tourism nobody could say, only that the car rental business was brisk.

"Not even a long weekend," the Molokai U-Drive counter clerk said. "It's the pageant."

She was heading there herself.

After a busy day of sightseeing on "The Friendly Island," in a van, the contestants lounged by the pool at the Pau Hana Inn rubbing suntan lotion on their cleanly shaved legs.

"On Sunday," ex-Fantasy Queen Ellie Kai said, "we're going to church."

"The Baptist church," she said — "in our Sunday best."



Kira Garrett of Waipahu.